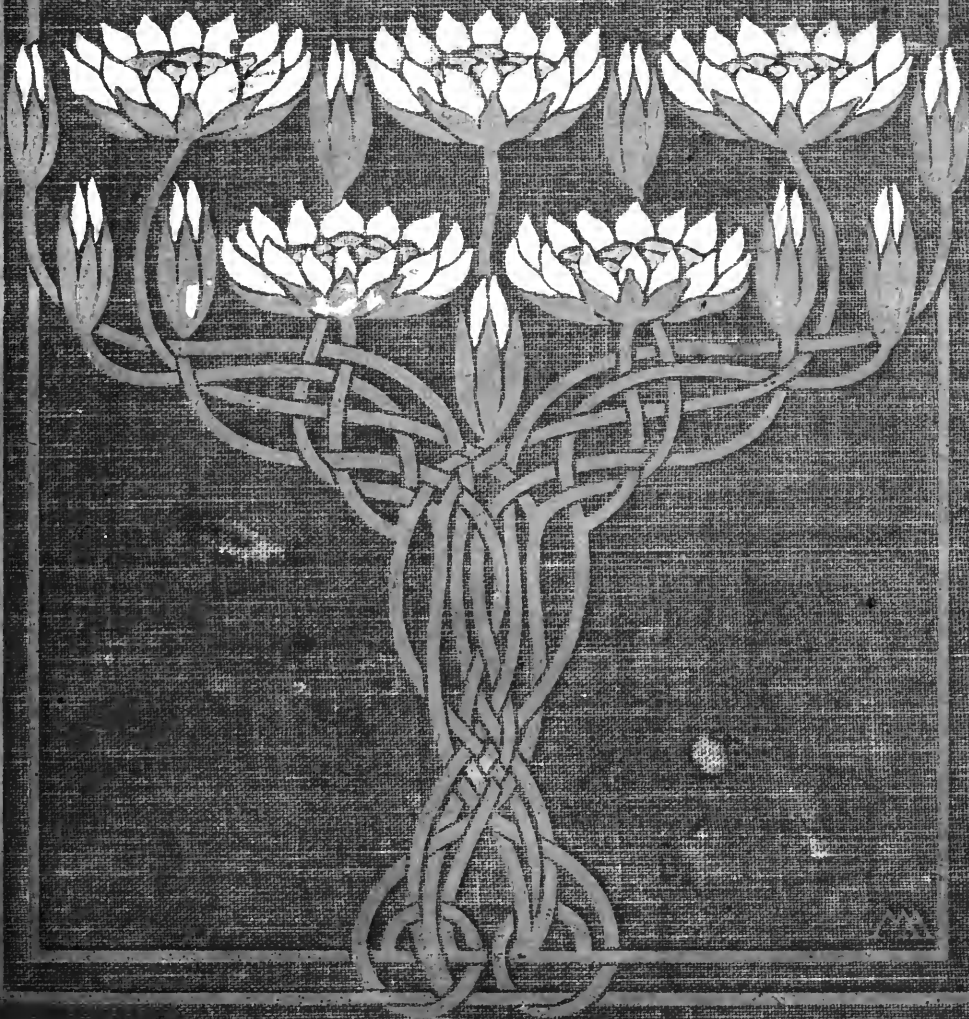
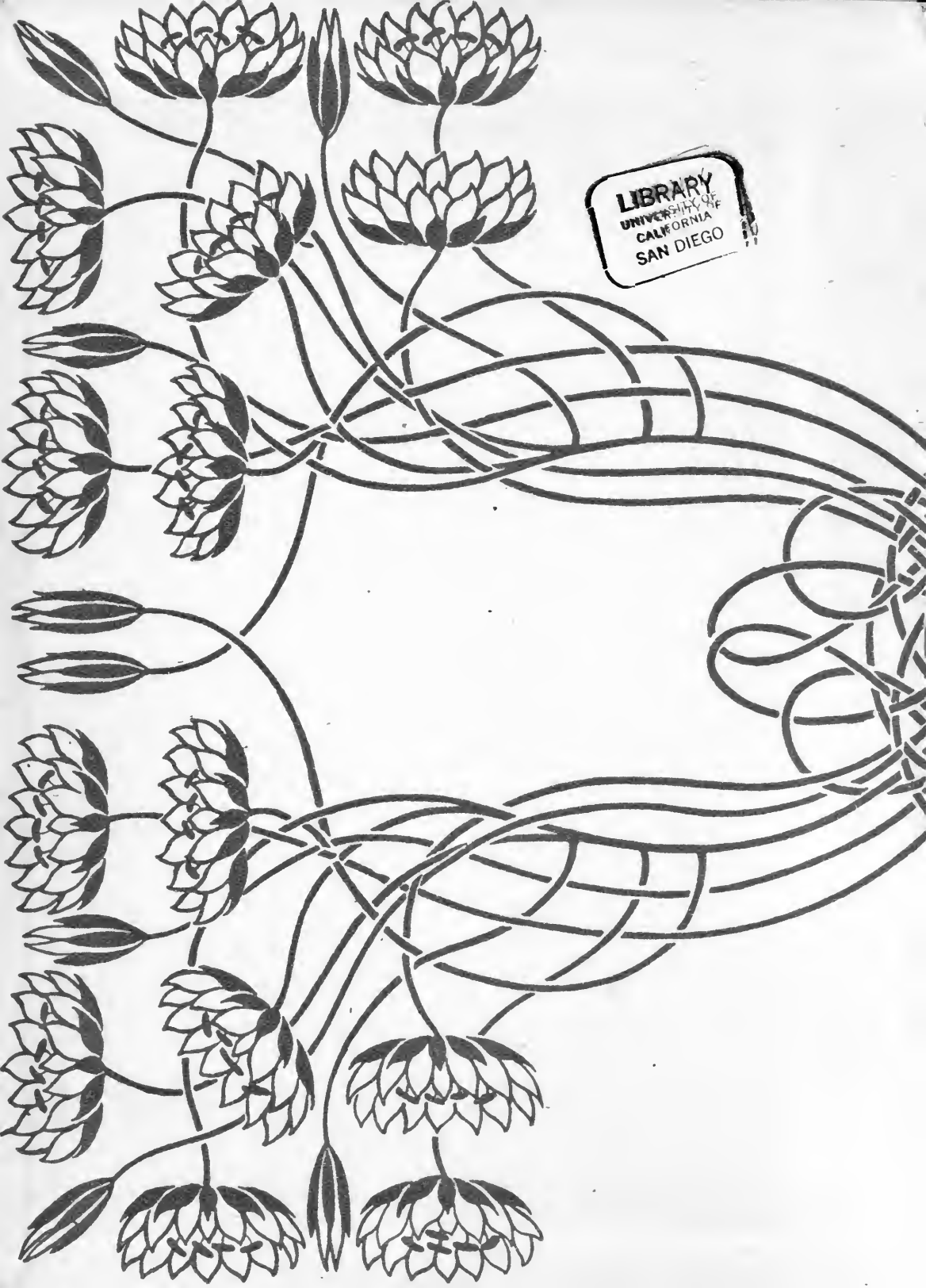


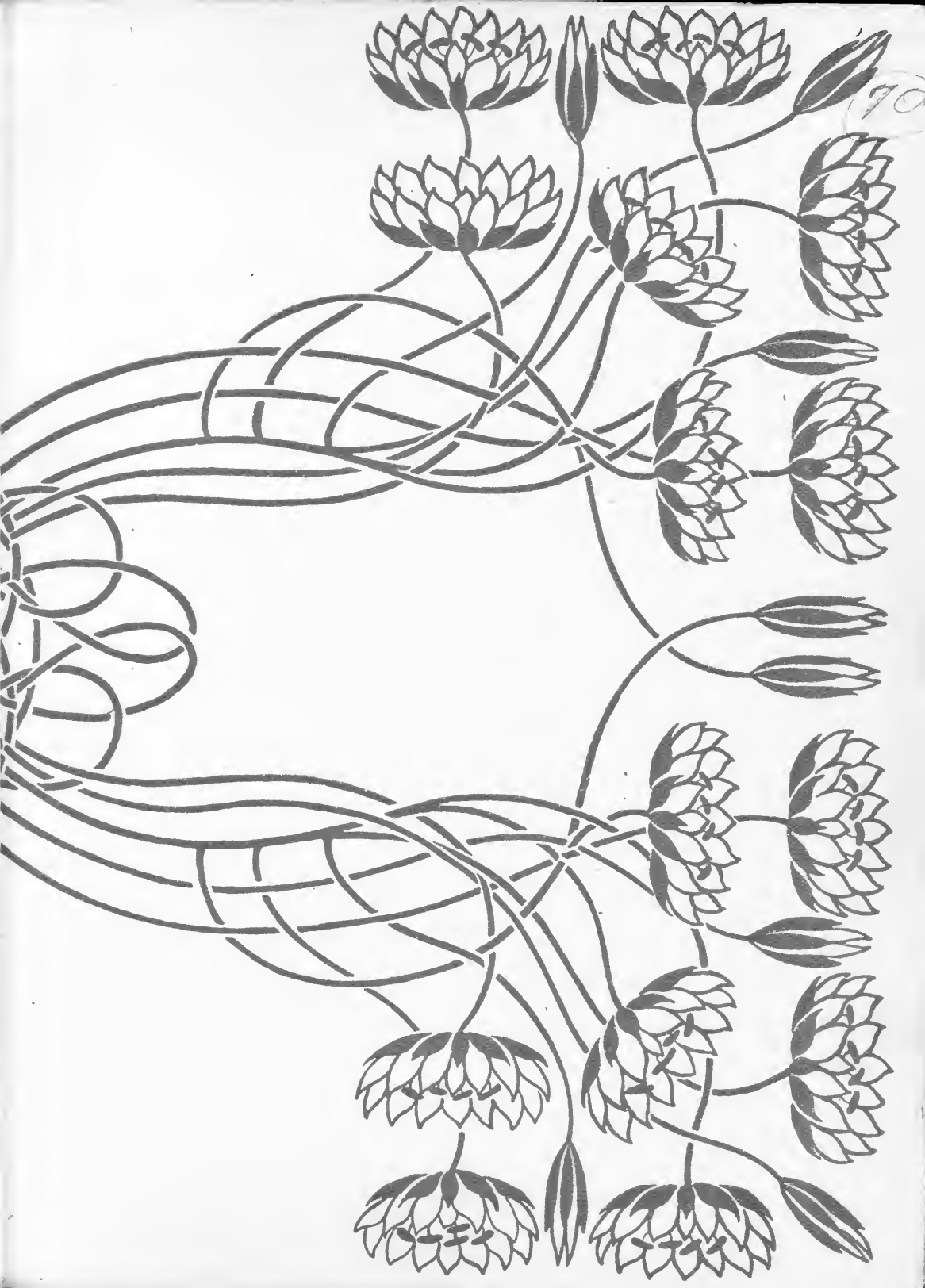
IMMENSEE

Theodore Storm



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IMMENSEE





"Do not forget"

IMMENSEE

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF
THEODOR STORCK
BY GEORGE PAURION
TRANSLATOR OF "MEMORIES"

ILLUSTRATED AND DECORATED BY
MARGARET
AND
HELEN MAITLAND ARMSTRONG

CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURE & CO.
1907

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1907

Published October 12, 1907

The Lakeside Press
R. R. DONNELLEY & SONS COMPANY
CHICAGO

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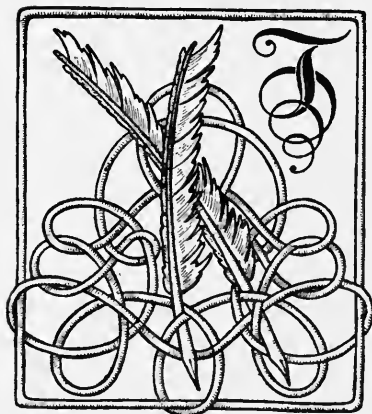
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE





TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE



THE present translator of “Immensee” has not sought to make a literal rendering of the original text. His object has been to give English readers as excellent an English version as he is capable of making, so that it shall bring to them an understanding and appreciation of the beautiful story, corresponding as nearly as possible with that which the original must bring to German readers. With this object in view he has made a free translation, and has eliminated the German idiom





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wherever it was practical, and has also made such additions and changes as seemed to him necessary for more perfect English form. The translator, in this connection, acknowledges the courtesy of Mr. John Vance Cheney, whose own lyrics are so well known, in acceding to his request to make an English metrical version of those in "Immensee." While these have also been translated freely, Mr. Cheney has retained the style and sentiment of the original, and has invested them with an added poetical charm of his own.

G. P. U.

CHICAGO, 1907.



THEODORE STORM

AN APPRECIATION



THEODORE STORM

AN APPRECIATION



DEEP vein of poetry, romance, and sentiment runs through the literature of the German people from the earliest period of its history. Tacitus observed it among the ancient Teutons. The origin of the Nibelungen Lied is almost prehistoric. The poetical romancers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries sang of the deeds of Charlemagne and the Knights of the Round Table, of the mysteries of the Holy Grail and the





IMMENSE



passions of Tristram and Iseult. The Minnesingers and Mastersingers of the same period were inspired by love and beauty and the joy of life, as Wagner has shown in the "Prize Song" of Walther von der Vogelweide, who learned his music from nature, not from the Tabulatur. The literature of the Reformation period was mainly religious and philosophical. Poetry and romance did not flourish luxuriantly in such hard soil. Then followed a time of decadence and servile imitation of French art. Frederick the Great, however, gave German literature a fresh impulse, though for a time he too was under the influence of Voltaire and tried to transplant Versailles into the sturdy German land. Soon came a series of great names—Lessing, Winckelmann, Klopstock, Wieland, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, the writers of the "Sturm und Drang" period, followed by Tieck,





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Hoffman, Fouquè (with his lovely "Undine"), Von Kleist, Rückert, Uhland, Heine, Freytag, Spielhagen, Heyse, Freiligrath, Anastasius Grün, and many writers of short stories of sentiment. Among those of our own day, or of the last generation, Max Müller, the author of "Deutsche Liebe," which the present translator has also rendered into English under the title of "Memories,"* and Theodore Storm, whose "Immensee" is a beautiful example of German lyric sentiment, stand out conspicuously.

Theodore Storm was born September 14, 1817, at Husum, a seaport in the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein. Though his literary ability manifested itself at a very early age in the production of poems and short stories of sentiment, he gave himself to the study of jurisprudence, first at the

* Published, in various editions, by A. C. McCLURG & Co.





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University of Kiel, and later at Berlin. He practised his profession in Husum for ten years, but lost his license because of his active participation in the revolt of Schleswig-Holstein against Denmark, in 1850. Three years later, he entered the Prussian civil service, but after the annexation of the Duchy to Prussia, returned to Husum, where he occupied many civil positions. During all these years, however, he was engaged in literary work, and "Immensee," one of his earliest and most beautiful lyrical romances, appeared before he entered the Prussian civil service. He retired from public life, in 1880, to his country seat at Anderau, near Hademarschen, in Holstein, where he died, July 4, 1888.

Considering the demands made upon his time by his profession and public duties, Storm was a prolific writer. A complete catalogue of his works





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comprises fifty-six publications, some of which are volumes of short stories, plays, or poems. One of the earliest of these is a volume of poems, entitled "Liederbuch dreier Freunde," which appeared in 1843. The other two friends are Tycho Mommsen and Theodore Mommsen, the latter the celebrated German historian. Theodore Mommsen was born in Schleswig, the same year as Storm. They studied law together at Kiel, and Mommsen, like Storm, was dispossessed of his rights as a practitioner because of his participation in the political disturbances of 1848-49.

Among the numerous works of Storm, the following have attained wide popularity: "Immensee," "Ein Bekenntniss," "Ein Grunesblatt," "Carsten Curatore," "Ein Doppelganger," "Der Herr Staatsrat," "In St. Jurgen," "Es waren zwei Königskinder," "Bei kleinen Leuten," "Ein stiller





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Musikant," "Renato," "Der Schimmel-breiter," "Im Schloss," "Angelica," "Maien-Kätzlein," "Veronica," "Späten Rosen," and "Ein Malerarbeit." Of all these, none has attained the popularity of "Immensee." It was written by Storm in the very prime of his life and ability, and at a time when his mind must have been preoccupied with political distractions and onerous civil duties, but to-day it retains unimpaired its beauty and freshness of sentiment, as well as the astonishing popularity of fifty-five years ago. The latest edition (Berlin, 1906) is the sixty-second. He had written other short stories and some poems previously to "Immensee," but the story of Reinhardt and Elizabeth is the one which first established his reputation as a lyric artist, and it is the one by which he will be longest remembered. The critics do not assign it equal importance with





some of his more mature and sustained works, but it is best beloved by the German people.

The motive of "Immensee" is a vision of lost youth, and its symbol is a water lily, inevitably recalling the old song, "Thou art so Near and yet so Far." "Immensee," set to music, might have been the theme of Lumbye's "Vision in a Dream," or Schumann's "Träumerei." It is a love story, written without passion or ecstasies or demonstration of any kind. It is as pure, delicate, and graceful as the water lily, its symbol. In one of his letters, Storm says: "I am of a strong, passionate nature. The restraint to my writing, which is not so noticeable in the poems, is largely due to the absolute necessity of checking my impulses towards extravagance of expression. You will scarcely ever find the word 'love' or 'kiss' in my stories." This is true of "Immensee," and yet it





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is difficult to conceive of a more beautiful, pathetic, and well nigh tragical story of a hopeless love, lost in youth, its memory freshly enduring to old age. In another letter he gives us a hint which helps to explain the "restraint" and the delicate beauty of "Immensee." He says: "In my prose I rest from the excitements of the day, finding in it the quiet, green seclusion of summer." "Immensee" is a prose idyl. Its theme is the old, old human story of lost youth and lost love, told with infinite tenderness and sweetness, with not a thought or suggestion that defiles its pages, not a word one could wish stricken out. And the story is told so naturally one can hardly believe it is not an episode in his own life. In 1846 Storm married his first wife, Constance Esmarch, a very beautiful and gifted lady. She had an excellent alto voice and her husband a fine tenor voice, and





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the two often sang Schubert's, Schumann's, and Mendelssohn's songs together. Did not Elizabeth's alto and Reinhardt's tenor also blend in the folk songs at Immensee? Storm gave to Constance one of his earliest books, "Sommergeschichten und Liebe," many of the sketches in which were inspired by her. Did not Reinhardt give Elizabeth also a little volume of favorite stories which he had told her in the sod house summer afternoons and by the home fire in the winter evenings? This, however, may be only a fancy. It is enough that we have in "Immensee" the story of the lost love of Elizabeth and Reinhardt, told with exquisite grace, of a pathetic episode in the life of the gipsy zither girl, who appears only twice in these pages and yet leaves such a distinct impression; of the homely lines of commonplace Erich who drew the "great prize" Reinhardt lost, and the mother





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who, perhaps unconsciously, wrought such sadness in two lives while she sat spinning; of a woman's love infinitely piteous and of a man's love greatly noble after all; of the compensation of study; of the beauty of pine thickets, beech woods, and the heather, and the loveliness of Immensee, the far blue mountains, and the water lily which Reinhardt vainly strove to pluck; of the old man's vision in a dream of tender beauty, tinged with unutterable sadness. It is a love poem, but the violins are muted.

Many of Theodore Storm's stories partake of the general characteristics of "Immensee." He was greatly inspired by "Faust," Heine's tender lyrics, those in which the poet forgot his cynicism, like the "Pine and Palm," the "Lorelei," and "Thou art like unto a Flower," and by Fouqu  's "Undine" and Uhland's lyrics. They





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are not studio canvasses, labored over, but arabesques, aquarelles, and pastelles, daintily sketched and delicately tinted in enduring colors because they came from the heart. His works are not like flashes of meteor flights, but the calm effulgence of the enduring stars. His art is essentially lyric. His sentiment is poetic and pure. His highest success lies in the delineation of the graces of tenderness in human nature. His work tends to make life better, nobler, and purer.

G. P. U.

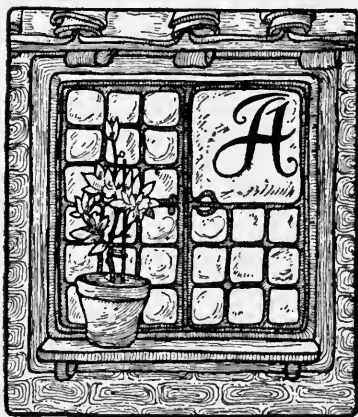


I
THE OLD MAN'S VISION



I

THE OLD MAN'S VISION



LOVELY Autumn afternoon was drawing to its close as an old man, plainly but neatly dressed, slowly passed along the village street. He was evidently returning from a long walk, for his quaint, old-fashioned buckled shoes were dusty, and he leaned wearily upon his stout, gold-headed cane. His piercing black eyes, still lustrous with the fire of lost youth, strikingly contrasted with the snowy whiteness of his hair, but their serene expression indicated little interest in



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the scenes around him. Apparently he was a stranger; at least few of those whom he met greeted him, though many, attracted by the irresistible fascination of those strange eyes, turned to look after him.

The old man at last stopped before a high-gabled house, looked around a moment, and then rang the bell. Hardly had its sound ceased when the green curtain hanging at the little porch window was drawn aside and an elderly woman peered out. He motioned with his cane and as she opened the door, said to her, with a slightly Southern accent, "No light yet!" He slowly passed down the hallway to an ante-room, against the walls of which stood heavy oaken cabinets filled with oriental vases and rare porcelains. The door opened upon a small corridor, whence a narrow staircase led to a back chamber. He wearily





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climbed the stairs, unlocked the door, and entered his own cosy, retired apartment. One wall was almost entirely given up to shelves and book-cases, and another was covered with portraits and landscapes. A large easy chair, upholstered in red silk, stood by a green-covered table, on which several open books were lying. After placing his hat and cane in the corner, the old man dropped into his chair, folded his arms, and prepared to enjoy a grateful rest after his fatiguing walk. As the dark gradually came on, a ray of moonlight streamed through the window panes, bathing the room in its soft glow. As it crept slowly along the wall, the old man's gaze involuntarily followed it. At last it reached a little portrait in a simple black frame and irradiated the face. He rose and went to the picture.

“Elizabeth,” he gently murmured.





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At the sound of that beloved name, the spell
of its magic brought back the memories of old
days and—

He was a child again.



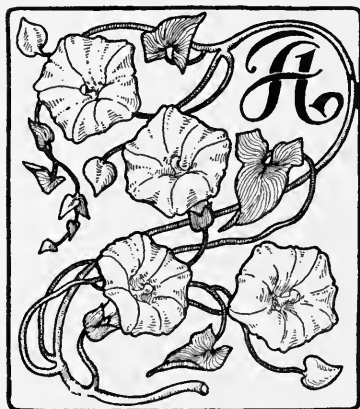
II

ELIZABETH AND REINHARDT



II

ELIZABETH AND REINHARDT



GRACEFUL little maiden, named Elizabeth, was again by his side. She was five years of age, perhaps, and he was nearly twice as old. She wore around her neck a red silk kerchief,

which served to heighten the charm of her ruddy, blithesome face.

“Reinhardt,” she cried exultantly, “school will not keep to-day or to-morrow. We are free two whole days. What a good time we can have!”





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Reinhardt, on hearing the welcome news, instantly laid the slate which he was carrying under his arm down behind the door, and off the two children scampered through the house to the garden at the back and out through the garden gate to the meadow beyond. The unexpected holiday gave Reinhardt the very opportunity for which he had been longing, for, with Elizabeth's assistance, he had made a sod house in which they had planned to spend their summer evenings. The only thing needed to carry out their purpose was a bench. As hammer, nails, and saw were all in readiness, he began the work at once. Elizabeth, in the meantime, was busily engaged filling her apron with the round seeds of wild mallows, which she gathered by the side of the wall and with which she often made chains and necklaces. Though he drove the nails awkwardly and they





"Our house is ready"



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gave him much trouble, the bench was speedily finished, and Reinhardt stepped out into the sunshine to call Elizabeth, who was by this time at the farther side of the meadow.

“Elizabeth! Elizabeth!” he shouted, as loudly as he could. She heard his call and at once ran toward him, her curls flying in the breeze. “Hurry up,” said he, “the house is now all ready.” And as she came up to him, he added, “You are very warm. Come in and try our new bench, and I will tell you a story.”

They entered hand in hand and seated themselves. Elizabeth took the little seeds from her apron and commenced stringing them on a long thread as Reinhardt began:

“Once upon a time there were three spinsters—”

“Oh, dear!” interrupted Elizabeth, “I know





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that story by heart already. You should not always tell me the same one."

Reinhardt did not continue the tale of the three spinsters, but told instead the story of the poor man who was thrown into the lions' den. "It was night, do you know," he said; "all dark, and the lions were asleep, though they would yawn now and then and run out their red tongues and show their cruel teeth. The poor man shuddered as he watched them and longed for the morning to come. Suddenly a great light shone round about him and an angel appeared before him and beckoned him to follow her as she vanished among the rocks."

Elizabeth listened with eager attention. "An angel?" said she. "Did it have wings?"

"Oh, this is only a story angel," said Reinhardt; "there are no real angels."





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“O Reinhardt, how can you say that?” she replied, looking him full in the face. But when she saw that he was displeased and that a frown was gathering on his brow, she said, hesitatingly, “If there are no angels, then why do mother and aunt and every one at school speak of them so often?”

“I don’t know,” Reinhardt replied.

“And are there no real lions either?” asked Elizabeth.

“Lions? Of course, there are lions,” replied Reinhardt. “The heathen priests in India harness them to their carts and drive them over the desert. I am going to that country some day, after I have grown up. It is a thousand times nicer than it is here, for they don’t have any winter. And you must go with me too, Elizabeth. Will you?”

“I will go if my mother and your mother will go with us,” said Elizabeth.





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“No, no,” said Reinhardt, “they will be too old to go, then, you know.”

“But my mother will never let me go alone to that far-away country,” replied Elizabeth.

“Oh, that makes no difference,” said Reinhardt. “It is your duty to go. And when we get there you will be my real wife, and no one can order us about. We can do just as we please.”

“But my mother will cry,” said Elizabeth.

“Oh, never mind that, we can come back again now and then,” replied Reinhardt, with great earnestness. “Tell me right off, will you go with me? If you say ‘No,’ I shall go alone, and then I shall never come home again.”

The little maiden could hardly keep back her tears. “Do not be angry with me, Reinhardt, do not be bad to me. I will go to India with you.”

Reinhardt was almost overcome with joy. He





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took Elizabeth by the hand, and off the happy children ran across the meadow. "To India, to India," he cheerily shouted, at the same time dragging Elizabeth along with him at such a pace that her kerchief flew off. Suddenly he stopped, and said to her with the utmost seriousness: "Oh, it's no use, Elizabeth, to think of your going to India. You have not courage enough. You are only a girl."

Before she could reply, some one at the garden gate called, "Elizabeth! Reinhardt!"

"Here we are, here we are," the children answered, as they ran back to the house, hand in hand.



III

A DAY IN THE WOODS





III

A DAY IN THE WOODS



T was thus the children passed their time when they were together. Elizabeth was sometimes too quiet to suit Reinhardt, and Reinhardt was often too boisterous to please Elizabeth, and yet they were inseparable companions. Nearly all their leisure hours in winter were spent playing together in the cosy home rooms, and in summer roaming the fields. One day when Elizabeth was reproved by her teacher before Reinhardt he purposely slammed his slate down on his desk, hoping





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thereby to divert the teacher's displeasure to himself. His good intentions, however, were of no avail. Thereupon Reinhardt suddenly lost all interest in his geography lessons. Instead of studying them, he wrote a long poem in which he described himself as a young eagle, the schoolmaster as an old crow, and Elizabeth as a white dove. He also pictured the eagle as determined to avenge the wrongs of the dove by swooping down and pouncing on the crow as soon as its wings were strong enough. Tears came into the young poet's eyes as he contemplated his thrilling epic. When he reached home he made a little album and carefully inscribed his first poem on the opening page. Not long after this occurrence Reinhardt went to another school, where he found many new comrades among boys of his own age, but his attachment for Elizabeth remained as





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strong as ever. He now began writing the favorite stories he had told Elizabeth so many times. Many a time the longing to weave some of his own fancies into these stories possessed him, but somehow he failed every time he attempted it. He could write only what she had heard so often. When finished he gave the manuscript to her and she carefully preserved it in a drawer of her little cabinet. Nothing gave Reinhardt greater delight and satisfaction than to listen to Elizabeth when she occasionally read these stories in the evening to her mother.

Seven years passed rapidly away and the time had come for Reinhardt to leave home and seek his higher education. Elizabeth could hardly realize that she and Reinhardt must separate, but she was greatly comforted when he told her that he should still write stories for her, as he had been





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doing, and that he would enclose them in his letters to his mother. He also asked her to write to him and tell him how she liked them. Before he left he wrote a little verse in the book. He kept it a secret from Elizabeth, although she was the original inspiration of the book, now half filled with poems, nearly all devoted to her.

On a lovely June morning, the last before his leave-taking, their friends arranged a picnic in the woods not far away, so that they might enjoy one more holiday together. After riding to the edge of the forest the little party walked the rest of the way, carrying their lunch baskets. The road led for a time through a cool and shady grove of pines, carpeted with fragrant needles. After a half-hour's walk they emerged from the sombre pine recesses into a brighter and more cheerful spot, musical with the rustle of fresh green beech





The Picnic



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leaves. Here and there sunbeams streamed through the branches, checkering the grass with light and shade, and chattering squirrels frisked from limb to limb above them. At last they reached a place where the old beeches overspread them with a canopy of verdure. Elizabeth's mother opened the baskets, and an old man appointed himself master of ceremonies. "Come here, all you young birds," he called, "and pay strict attention to what I am going to say. Each one of you can have two dry rolls for lunch. As the butter has been left at home, you will have to find something else to go with the bread. They say there are plenty of strawberries in these woods, if you only know where to find them. Those who do not will have to get along with dry bread. That is always the way in life, you know. Now do you understand what I have been telling you?"





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“Oh, yes, perfectly,” shouted the children, as they started off.

“Wait a minute,” said the old man, “I am not through yet. We old people have done enough travelling in our lives, so we are going to stay at home, as you might say, under these big trees. We shall peel the potatoes, kindle the fire, and set the table, and at twelve o’clock the eggs will be boiled. I want you to keep half your strawberries for us, so that we also may have some dessert. Now be off, and be sure to divide fairly.”

The children made all sorts of roguish faces at him and started again. “Wait a minute,” said the old man. “Of course, those who don’t find berries will not be expected to furnish any, but, bear this in mind, they will get none from us old people. Now, I think you have had instruction





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enough for once, and if you get some strawberries also, you will have had a very useful and enjoyable day."

The children evidently were of the same mind, and scampered away in couples.

"Come on, Elizabeth," said Reinhardt. "I know where there is a strawberry patch. We will have something besides dry bread."

Elizabeth tied the green ribbons of her straw hat together, and, hanging it upon her arm, said, "Come on, Reinhardt. Here is our basket." Deeper and deeper they went into the woods through shadowy and almost impenetrable places where no sound was heard but the screaming of invisible falcons far above the tree tops. Again, they made their way through thickets so dense that Reinhardt often had to take the lead and help Elizabeth struggle through by breaking the





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interlacing branches and holding the vines aside. Suddenly Reinhardt heard her call his name a little distance behind him and turned to listen.

“Reinhardt,” she implored, “wait, do wait.” He could not see her at first, but after a little, discovered her desperately trying to force her way through the tangle of bushes. Her pretty little head was just visible above some brakes. He went back at once and helped her to reach an open spot, where blue butterflies were fluttering among the wood flowers. Reinhardt brushed back the moist locks from her forehead and suggested that she put on her hat, but she would not consent until he had begged her to do so.

“Where are the strawberries you spoke about?” said Elizabeth, after recovering her breath.

“They used to grow around here,” said Reinhardt; “but I think the toads, or the birds, or





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perhaps the elves, must have been here before us."

"Oh, yes," said Elizabeth, "I see the leaves are here, but don't let us talk about elves in this place. Come along, Reinhardt, I am not tired yet. Let us keep on looking for the strawberries."

They soon came to a little brook, over which Reinhardt carried Elizabeth, and shortly emerged from the thicket to find themselves in a clear spot in the woods. "There must be strawberries here," said Elizabeth, "the air is so sweet." They searched the place over and over, but could not find any.

"No," said Reinhardt, "you smell the perfume of the heather." Raspberry and holly bushes grew in profusion all about them, and a strong scent of heather filled the air.

"It is so lonesome here," said Elizabeth. "I wonder where the others are."





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Reinhardt, who had not thought of going back yet, stopped and said: "Wait a minute. Which way is the wind?" He raised his hand, but not a breath of air was stirring.

"Hark!" said Elizabeth. "It seems as if I could hear some one talking right over there. Call once in that direction."

Using his hand as a trumpet, Reinhardt shouted, as loud as he could, "Come over here!"

"Over here," was the distinct reply.

"They are answering us," said Elizabeth, clapping her hands in delight.

"Oh, no, it is only the echo."

Elizabeth clung to Reinhardt. "I am afraid," she said.

"No, no, you must not be afraid. It is nice and safe here. Let us rest in the shade a while. We shall soon find the others."





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Elizabeth seated herself under the beech branches and listened intently in every direction. Reinhardt sat on a stump a little distance off and quietly watched her. The heat of the mid-day sun was intense. The air was full of the hum of myriads of blue and golden insects, and they frequently heard the tapping of woodpeckers and the sweet songs of birds deep hidden in the woods.

Suddenly Elizabeth exclaimed, "Listen! Bells are ringing."

"In what direction?"

"Behind us. Do you not hear them? Why, it must be noon."

"Then the town is back of us and if we keep straight ahead, we shall find the others."

As Elizabeth was very tired, they gave up searching for strawberries and began their return without delay. They had not proceeded far before





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they heard the merry laughter of their friends, and almost at the same instant espied a white cloth on the grass, on which was a dish heaped with strawberries. The old man, with a napkin fastened in his buttonhole, was giving the children another instalment of moral instruction, while he carved the meat.

The children interrupted his discourse when they saw Elizabeth and Reinhardt coming through the trees, with the shout, "Here are the stragglers."

"Come on!" called the old man. "Empty your handkerchief and hat and let us see what you have found."

"Only hunger and thirst," said Reinhardt.

"If that be all," replied the old man, as he teased them with the sight of the full dish, "you will have to go hungry and thirsty. You very





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well know what I told you. We cannot feed idlers here." At last, however, he relented, and allowed them to eat with the others. And the thrushes sang their sweetest and most blithesome strains in the junipers all through the pleasant repast.

The beautiful June day passed joyously, and at its close Reinhardt realized that he had found something. It was not strawberries nor was it anything else that grows in the woods. These verses, which he wrote in their book that night tell what he had found:

Where, on the warm hillside,
Is not a pulse of air
Among the summer boughs,
A maid is dreaming there.

Never to any place
Did sweeter odors come;
Gay insects glitter round,
And drowsily they hum.





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The thing the still wood says
To the dear maid is said ;
The sun is spilling gold
Upon her little head.

A wood elf whispers me,
The cuckoo calls between :
I looked her in the eyes—
She is the Sylvan Queen!

Yes, Reinhardt had found something. He had found that Elizabeth was not only his playmate and companion, but also the ideal of everything lovely and of every sweet mystery in the morning of his life.



IV
CHRISTMAS TIDE



IV

CHRISTMAS TIDE



CHRISTMAS was approaching. One afternoon Reinhardt and other students, as was their habit, met around the old oaken table in the rathskeller. The wall lamps were lighted, for it

was already beginning to grow dark in the room, but customers were so few that the waiters idly lounged and gossiped. In a corner alcove sat a fiddler and a zither girl, the latter with delicate but gipsy-like features. They were holding their instruments in their laps and looking listlessly about the room.



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As the champagne corks were popping at the table, a jolly-looking young student approached the girl and offered her a glass of wine, saying: "Drink, my pretty little Bohemian."

"I do not wish to," she replied, with an air of the greatest indifference.

"Well, sing then," said the young fellow, as he threw some silver pieces into her lap. She slowly ran her fingers through her black hair as her companion whispered something in her ear, but she only tossed her head, and leaned her chin upon the zither.

"I will not sing for that man," she said.

Then Reinhardt rose from the table and stood before her, glass in hand. "What do *you* want of me?" she fiercely asked.

"To see your eyes," said Reinhardt.

"My eyes are no concern of yours," she replied.





I M M E N S E E



Reinhardt gave her a penetrating glance and answered: "I know well enough they are false."

The girl rested her cheek upon her hand and closely watched him. Raising his glass to his lips, Reinhardt said: "I drink to your beautiful, wicked eyes."

With a scornful laugh she turned to him and said: "Give me your glass." Then, fixing her dark eyes full upon him, she drank what was left, and after sounding a chord upon her zither, sang in a low, passionate voice:

Look, Love, to-day,
While yet my face is fair;
To-morrow, Love,
You will find no beauty there.

One little hour, Love,
All our own;
Then love will be gone,
And I alone.





I M M E N S E E



While the fiddler was playing a lively cadenza to her song, a newcomer joined the group of students.

"I called for you, Reinhardt," he said, "but you ran away too soon. The Christ Child has been making you a visit."

"The Christ Child does not visit me any more," replied Reinhardt.

"Don't say that," said his friend. "Your room is filled with the fragrance of cakes and the Christmas tree."

Reinhardt set down his glass and took his cap.

"Where are you going?" said the girl.

"Oh, I shall come back soon," said he.

A frown gathered on her brow. With alluring glances she gently implored him to stay. Reinhardt hesitated an instant, but at last replied, "I cannot."





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Pushing him away from her contemptuously with her foot, she said: "You are a good-for-nothing. You are all a worthless pack." As she turned from him, Reinhardt reluctantly climbed the rathskeller stairs and went out into the night.

Twilight had deepened into dark. The bracing winter air cooled his heated brow. Here and there the windows reflected the bright lights of the Christmas trees, and occasionally he heard the noise of little tin whistles and trumpets and the merry shouts of children. Troops of poor children went from house to house, soliciting alms, and some of them clung to the stair rails and tried to catch glimpses of the wondrous sights from which they were shut out, only to be scolded and driven away by the servants. In some places they sang old carols in front of houses, and among the singers were many maidens whose fresh young





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voices lent added charm to the music; but Reinhardt paid little heed to Christmas cheer or Christmas music as he hurried along from one street to another. When he reached his own house he found it dark. He ran up the steps and went to his room. As he opened the door he was greeted by a sweet fragrance, which reminded him of his mother's room at Christmas. With a trembling hand he lit the lamp. A large package was lying upon the table, and as he hurriedly opened it, behold the familiar Christmas cakes! On some of them his initials were traced in sugar. Surely no one but Elizabeth could have done that. He also found a small package of finely embroidered linen handkerchiefs, and cuffs, and letters from his mother and Elizabeth. He read Elizabeth's letter first. She wrote:

“You will easily recognize by the sugar letters





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who helped make the cakes. The same one embroidered the cuffs for you. We shall have a very quiet time Christmas Eve. Mother even puts her spinning-wheel in the corner at half-past nine. It is very lonesome this winter with Reinhardt away. The poor little linnet you gave me died last Sunday. I cried bitterly, and yet I have always taken the best care of it. It nearly always sung in the afternoons when the sun shone into its cage. Don't you remember how mother used to cover it over with a cloth when the linnet sung too loudly? It would be very quiet in the house if your old friend Erich did not now and then make us a call. You once made sport of Erich in his brown overcoat. I always think of it when he appears at the door. Is it not funny? But I do not mention it to mother, she is so easily vexed. What do you suppose I shall send your





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mother for a Christmas gift? Myself. Erich made a crayon portrait of me. I had to sit three times for him, an hour each time, and it troubled me, for I do not like to have a stranger grow so familiar with my face; but my mother prevailed upon me to sit. She said my picture would give good Frau Werner great pleasure.

“Reinhardt, you have not kept your promise. You have not sent me any stories. I have mentioned it several times to your mother, but she always says that you are very busy now and have no time to waste upon such childish things. I cannot believe this. I think there must be some other reason for it.”

After reading both letters Reinhardt carefully folded them together and laid them away. A feeling of homesickness which he could not shake off overcame him. He paced up and down his





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room for a long time in gloomy revery. Once he said to himself, half unconsciously:

His feet were in the dangerous way,
He journeyed in the night;
A child reached out her little hand,
And led him to the light.

Reinhardt took some money from his desk and left the house again. The streets by this time were very quiet. The Christmas candles had burned out, and the processions of the children had ceased. The wind swept dismally through the deserted streets, and old and young were sitting quietly together in their homes as usual. The after part of Christmas was commencing.

As Reinhardt approached the rathskeller he heard the scrape of the fiddle and the tinkle of the zither. A dark figure staggered up the poorly lighted steps. He stepped back into the shadow





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of a house and then hurried past the keller. Not far from there he found a jeweller's shop, where he purchased a little coral cross, and then returned home by the way he had come.

Near the house he observed a little girl, clad in wretched rags. She was standing at the door of another house, trying in vain to open it. "Let me help you," he said to her. The child made no reply, but let go of the heavy knob. Reinhardt was about to open the door for her, but he suddenly bethought himself. "No, no," he said to the child, "they will only drive you away. Come with me and I will give you some Christmas cakes." Thereupon he took her hand and led her in silent surprise to his home.

He had left his light burning when he went out. "Here are some cakes," he said, placing half of his treasure in her apron, but none of





"Come with me



I M M E N S E



those which had the sugar letters on them. "Now go home and give your mother some of them too," he said to the child, who gave him a half scared look. She was not accustomed to kindness and knew not how to make reply. Reinhardt opened the door and let her out. The little one ran down the steps, tightly holding on to the cakes, and flew homeward like a bird.

After stirring the fire, Reinhardt placed his dusty ink-stand upon the table. Then he sat down and spent the live-long night writing letters to Elizabeth and his mother. The remaining Christmas cakes lay untouched near him, but he had put on the cuffs Elizabeth sent him, though not altogether suited to his house coat. Thus he sat, writing and thinking, until the sun lit up the frosted window panes with sparkling glory. But Reinhardt's mirror showed only a sad and pallid face.



V

CHANGES AT HOME





V

CHANGES AT HOME



EINHARDT went home at Easter and called upon Elizabeth the morning after his arrival. "How tall you have grown," he said, as the slender, beautiful girl smilingly came forward to greet him. She blushed, but made no reply, as she gently sought to withdraw her hand from his. There was a certain restraint in their meeting which they had never felt in earlier days. It was almost as conventional as the meeting of two strangers, nor did the new and strange feeling





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disappear as time passed. It was manifest whenever Reinhardt called. When alone with her he made a great effort to prevent embarrassing breaks in conversation, which were growing painful to him. That he might see her as frequently as possible during the vacation, he commenced giving her lessons in botany, a study to which he had enthusiastically devoted himself during the first months of his university life. Elizabeth, who greatly valued his suggestions, and besides was very fond of botany, took up the work with alacrity. They made several trips to the meadows and woods during the week, from which she returned at noon with the herbarium filled with leaves and flowers, Reinhardt usually returning later to share his specimens with her.

One afternoon Reinhardt entered Elizabeth's room as she was standing at the window placing





There was a canary in the cage



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fresh chickweed in a gilt cage which he had not seen in that place before. A canary was fluttering its wings, uttering shrill little chirps, and pecking at Elizabeth's finger. Reinhardt's linnet once occupied the same cage. "Has my poor dead linnet turned into a goldfinch?" he asked, with some bitterness.

"Linnets never change like that," said Elizabeth's mother, who was sitting in her arm chair spinning. "Your friend, Erich, sent it to Elizabeth to-day from the farm."

"From the farm? What farm?"

"Do you not know?"

"Know what?"

"That Erich began the management of his father's other farm at Immensee a month ago?"

"How was I to know? You sent me no word about it."





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“Why should I? You made no inquiries about your friend, who is a very dear, sensible young man.”

The mother left the room to prepare the coffee. Elizabeth, with her back to Reinhardt, was busily engaged in fixing an arbor. “Excuse me just a little while,” said she, “until I have finished this work.” As Reinhardt made no reply she turned and looked at him in some surprise. There was a troubled expression in his eyes she had not observed before. “What is the matter, Reinhardt,” she asked.

“Matter with me?” he replied in an absent way, his eyes resting upon hers with a far-away look, as if he were in a revery.

“Yes,” said Elizabeth, “you seem so troubled.”

“Elizabeth, I cannot endure the sight of that canary.”





I M M E N S E E



She looked at him in astonishment and as if she did not clearly understand him.

“You are so strange,” was all she said.

Reinhardt took both her hands and she suffered them to remain quietly in his. At that instant the mother came in.

After the coffee the mother resumed her spinning. Reinhardt and Elizabeth went into the next room to arrange their specimens. They counted the stamens, spread the leaves and blossoms out smoothly, and selected two specimens of each kind which were to be pressed between the leaves of a heavy book. It was a quiet, sunny afternoon. The mother’s spinning-wheel hummed in the adjoining room and from time to time Reinhardt’s voice was audible as he told Elizabeth the various classes of the flowers, or corrected her mistakes in the pronunciation of their Latin names.





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“I have not found any lilies of the valley lately,” said she, after they had classified and arranged their collection.

Reinhardt took a little white note-book from his pocket. “Here is lily of the valley for you,” he said, taking out a half-dried spray.

Noticing that there was writing on the pages, Elizabeth asked, “Have you written any more stories?”

“There are no stories in this book,” he replied, handing it to her. It was nearly filled with verses. As Elizabeth turned the leaves her eye caught such titles as “When she was scolded by the teacher,” “When she was lost in the woods,” “Easter Romance,” “When she wrote me for the first time.” Nearly all were in this vein. Reinhardt watched her closely as she turned page after page and noticed a delicate flush overspread her face.





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He tried to see her eyes, but Elizabeth did not raise them when she quietly laid down the book.

“Do not give it back to me thus,” he said.

Elizabeth took a brown sprig from her tin case. “I will put your favorite flower in it,” said she. Then she handed him the book.

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The vacation was at an end and the morning of departure had come. Elizabeth’s mother yielded to her request and permitted her to accompany her friend to the coach office, a few squares distant from the house. When she came to the door Reinhardt offered his arm and walked silently by her side. But the nearer they came to their destination, the more ardently he longed to communicate something of great importance to her before taking the long farewell,—something





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upon which depends all the worth and meaning and joy of life; but he could not find fitting words for its expression. It troubled him, and he involuntarily slackened his pace.

"I fear you will be late," said Elizabeth. "The clock of St. Mary's has already struck ten."

Reinhardt did not hasten his steps. At last he stammered out: "Elizabeth, you will not see me again for two years. Will you like me just as well when I come back as you do now?"

She bent her head in assent and looked at him with the frank, cordial glance of a friend. "I have always taken your part," she said, after a pause.

"My part! Who has made it necessary for you to take my part?" said he.

"My mother!" said she. "We talked about you for a long time after you left last evening."





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Mother thinks you are not as good as you used to be."

Reinhardt was silent for a moment. Then he took her hand, and, looking earnestly into her eyes, said: "I am just as good as I have always been. Do you not believe it, Elizabeth?"

"Yes," said she. He let go her hand and they quickened their pace as they came to the last street. The nearer the moment of parting approached the more agitated Reinhardt became. He walked so fast that Elizabeth could hardly keep up with him.

"What is the matter, Reinhardt?" said she.

"I have a secret, O, a precious secret," he answered. "When I come back two years from now I will tell it to you."

At last they reached the coach office. Reinhardt once more took her hand. "Farewell,





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farewell, Elizabeth," he said, "do not forget."

She shook her head. "Farewell" was all she said. Reinhardt took his seat in the coach and it started. As it turned the corner he caught a last glimpse of the dear little figure slowly going homeward.

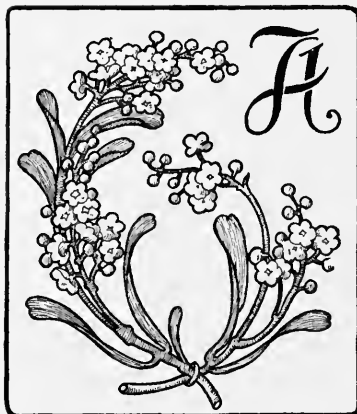


VI
A LETTER



VI

A LETTER



ABOUT two years after this time, as Reinhardt was sitting in the lamp-light among his books and papers awaiting a friend with whom he studied, a step was heard upon the stairs. "Come in," he called. His landlady entered with the announcement, "Here is a letter for you, Herr Werner," and then withdrew.

Reinhardt had not written to Elizabeth since his return nor had he heard from her. The letter was from his mother. He opened it and read:





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“At your age, my dear child, every year brings many changes, for the resources and possibilities of youth are boundless. But here in our quiet homes, where changes rarely come, there has been one which, I fear, will give you pain, if I rightly understand your feelings. After twice declining Erich’s offer of marriage in the last three months, Elizabeth gave her consent yesterday. She could not come to a decision at first, but she has at last done so. She is still very young, you know. The wedding will take place soon and her mother will go with them to the new home.”



VII
IMMENSEE



VII
IMMENSEE



GAIN the years have flown. One pleasant spring afternoon a young man with a strong, sun-browned face was following the downward windings of a forest road. His serious gray eyes scanned the distance as if he were looking for some object marking the end of the tedious journey, but he sought in vain. Shortly, a wagon came toiling slowly up the hilly road. "Halloa, good friend," cried the traveller to the approaching countryman, "is this the right road to Immensee?"





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“Keep straight ahead,” replied the man, touching his cap.

“Is it very far there?”

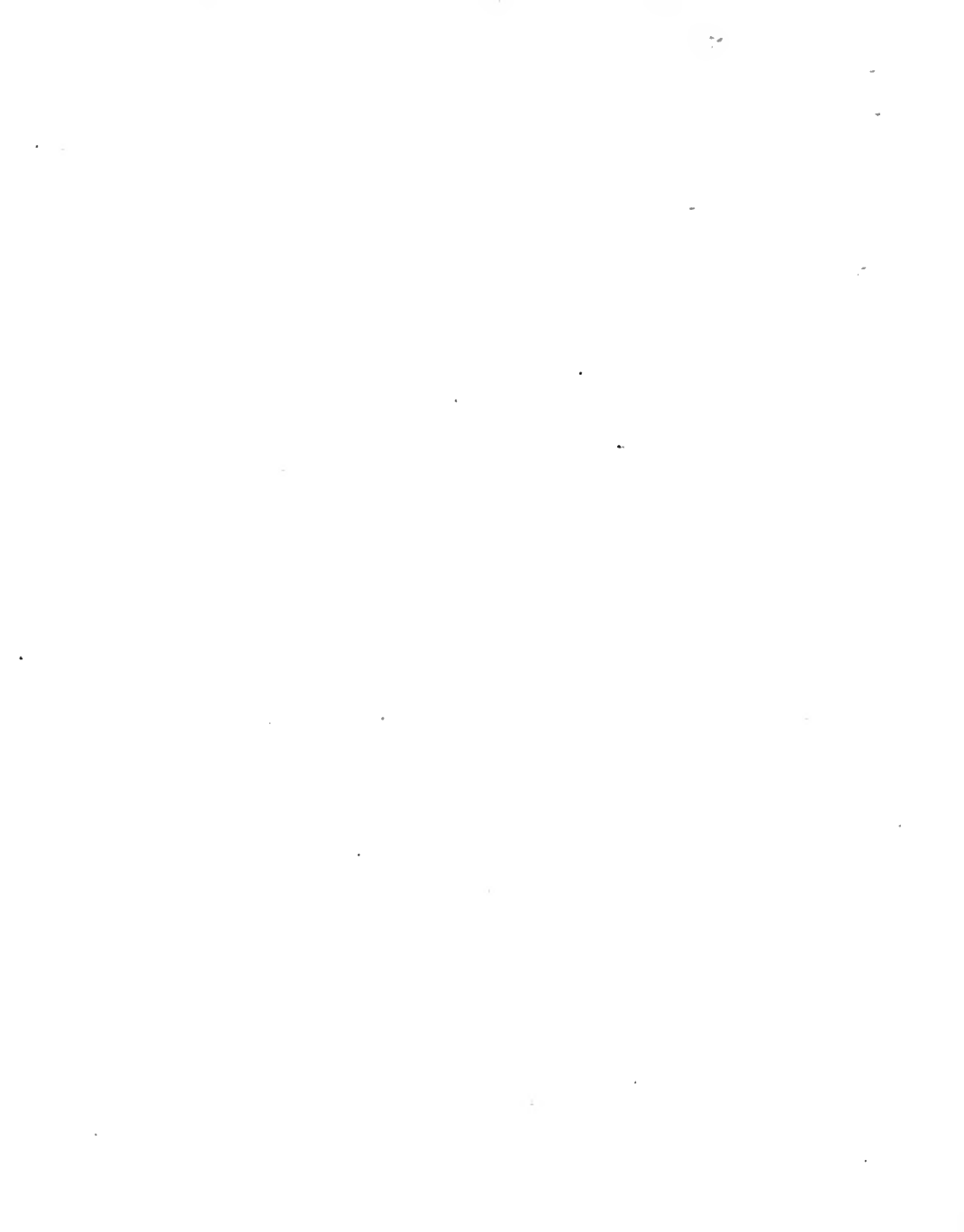
“No. The gentleman is very near to it. You will be at the lake by the time you can smoke half a pipe, and the house is close by it.”

The countryman drove on and the traveller resumed his walk under the trees. A quarter of an hour later he came to an opening on his left, and the road led down to a more level spot, clearly defined by the tops of the century-old oaks. Beyond it, a broad, sunny landscape lay outspread. Far below was the tranquil, dark blue lake, enclosed by green, sunlit woods, except at one point, where an opening lent itself to a distant view, fading away to the blue mountains. In the opposite direction fruit-trees, profusely decked with snowy white blossoms, offered a beautiful contrast





Elizabeth





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to the dark-green leafage of the woods. Still farther on, and crowning a slope, rose a white house with a red-tiled roof. A stork flew from one of the chimneys and slowly circled over the lake.

“Immensee!” exclaimed the traveller.

It almost seemed to him he had reached his journey’s end, as he stopped and looked over the tree tops at the distant shore of the lake, which clearly mirrored the image of the house in its gently rippling waters.

His road now led down a somewhat steep descent beneath the old oaks, so that he caught only occasional glimpses of the beautiful prospect. Shortly there was a gentle rise in the road, the old oaks were left behind, and he found himself in the midst of extensive and luxuriant vineyards and blossoming fruit-trees, musical with the hum of innumerable bees. A man in a brown overcoat





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was approaching him and at a short distance away waved his cap and enthusiastically shouted: "Welcome, welcome, brother Reinhardt—welcome to Immensee."

"God's greeting to you, Erich, and many thanks for the welcome," Reinhardt replied.

The two friends met and cordially shook hands. "Is it really you?" said Erich, as he scanned the serious countenance of his old school comrade.

"Surely it is I, and it is you also, Erich. I see no change except that you seem more cheerful than you used to be," said Reinhardt.

Erich's plain face was irradiated with a pleasant smile at these words. "Yes, brother Reinhardt," said he, stretching out his hand, "I have drawn a great prize since those days. But, of course, you know all about it." Then he clapped his hands





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and added with great glee: "This is a surprise. It is the last thing in the world she expects."

"A surprise?" said Reinhardt. "For whom?"

"For Elizabeth," answered Erich.

"Elizabeth! Did you not tell her I was coming?" said Reinhardt.

"I have not said a word about it, brother Reinhardt," replied Erich. "Neither Elizabeth nor her mother is expecting you. I invited you without their knowledge, so that Elizabeth's pleasure should be all the greater. You know, Reinhardt, I was always fond of mysterious little surprises."

Reinhardt grew more and more thoughtful as they approached the house, and at last it seemed hard for him even to breathe. The vineyards on their left soon gave place to a large kitchen garden, which stretched almost down to the lake.





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The stork, which had flown up from the water, was walking among the rows of vegetables in a dignified manner. "Halloa, there!" shouted Erich, as he clapped his hands. "That long-legged Egyptian thief is stealing my pea-stakes again." The stork slowly rose and flew to the roof of a building at the end of the kitchen garden, against the walls of which pear and apricot trees were trained. "That building is the winery," said Erich. "I built it about two years ago. My father remodeled the farm buildings, and my grandfather built our house. The buildings have been finished little by little, just as we all get on."

They had come by this time to a large open spot, partly surrounded by the farm buildings, with the house in the rear, the wings of which were enclosed by garden walls. Rows of dark yew trees were visible, and here and there lilacs in full bloom





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showed their purple heads above the walls and filled the air with their fragrance. Sun-browned laborers passed them, to some of whom Erich gave orders, questioning others about the progress of the day's work. At last they reached the house. They passed along a high, cool porch and at the end of it turned to the left into a somewhat dark passage. Erich opened a door leading into a spacious apartment which overlooked the garden, though the view was somewhat obscured by the heavy foliage near the windows. The tall, wide-opened folding doors, however, made up for this, for they let in the full brightness of the spring sunshine. It also afforded occasional glimpses of the garden, with its round flower beds and high hedges. A straight, broad walk ran through it, from which the distant lake and woods were visible.

As the two friends entered the garden the air





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was heavy with perfume. A girlish figure in white was sitting upon the terrace near the gate. She arose and advanced to meet them, but suddenly stopped as if rooted to the ground and gazed fixedly at Reinhardt, who was holding out his hand to her. "Reinhardt! Reinhardt!" she exclaimed, "is it you? How long it has been since we have seen you!"

"Not so very long," he answered. Then he was silent, for at the sound of her voice he felt a pang at his heart, and at the sight of her slender figure he remembered it was she to whom he had said "farewell" years before when he left home.

Erich was standing behind them, near the gate, his face radiant with delight. "Well, Elizabeth," said he, "was I not right? You did not expect Reinhardt to-day. I do not believe you ever expected to see him again."





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Elizabeth looked at him with a sisterly glance and simply replied: "You are very good, Erich." Whereupon Erich took her little hand in his and gently caressed it.

In the most cordial manner he added: "And now that we have him here, we shall not let him leave us soon, shall we? He has stayed away too long already. We will make him feel at home. Just see how he has changed and how distinguished looking he has grown."

As Elizabeth shyly scanned Reinhardt's face, he said: "You only see the changes which time makes in every one."

At that instant Elizabeth's mother entered with a little basket of keys on her arm. "Why, Herr Werner," she said as she saw Reinhardt, "you are a most welcome and unexpected visitor indeed." The conversation at first turned upon



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the usual personal matters. The two women occupied themselves with their work, and while Reinhardt was enjoying the repast set before him, Erich lit his meerschaum, settled down in his easy chair, and the two friends discoursed together upon various affairs.

During the next few days Erich showed Reinhardt the pastures, vineyards, and hop gardens, and through the winery. There were evidences of his excellent management everywhere. His laborers were healthy, cheerful, and contented. The family gathered in the garden room at noon, and Erich always joined them when his duties allowed. Early in the forenoon and before supper Reinhardt was busily engaged in his own room. He had devoted his leisure for several years to the collection of folk songs, and was now improving the opportunity to arrange the old and add some new





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ones, which he had already picked up in the neighborhood. Elizabeth was gracious and cordial in her bearing toward him at all times, but he was surprised at the humbleness and gratitude with which she received Erich's devoted attentions. He could hardly believe this was the joyous, blithesome Elizabeth of the old days.

After Reinhardt had been there two or three days, he took a walk every evening along the shore of the lake. The path led close by the garden wall, and at one spot, where it jutted out, there was a bench under some tall birches. The mother called it the "evening bench," as it was rarely occupied except at sundown. One evening, while returning from his stroll, he was overtaken by a shower. He sought shelter under a linden growing near the water's edge, but it afforded him slight protection, and he was soon drenched. He





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made the best of it, however, and slowly started for the house. It was growing dark, and the storm rapidly increased. As he approached the "evening bench" he fancied he saw the white figure of a woman among the birches. He hurried forward to see who it was and as he did so felt sure that she turned toward him, as if she were expecting to meet some one. He thought it must be Elizabeth, but as he quickened his steps to reach her and assist her home, she slowly turned and disappeared by a dark side path. He could not understand the meaning of her conduct. He was inclined to be angry with her, though he was not perfectly sure it was Elizabeth. He shrank from questioning her when he reached the house. He did not even go into the garden room, lest he might see her coming back by way of the garden gate.

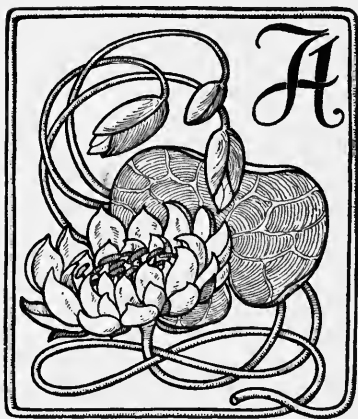


VIII
THE WATER LILY



VIII

THE WATER LILY



FEW days later the family were sitting together at dusk in the garden room, as was their custom at that time in the day. The doors were wide open and the sun had already sunk

behind the woods on the opposite side of the lake.

Reinhardt was asked to read some folk songs which he had received that afternoon from a friend. He went at once to his room, and returned with a package of neatly written manuscripts. They seated themselves at the table, Elizabeth by





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Reinhardt's side. "If you will permit me, I will take them as they come," he said, "for I have not yet had an opportunity to look them over."

Elizabeth unrolled the manuscripts. "Why, here are some set to music," she said. "You must sing them, Reinhardt."

When he came to some Tyrolean songs Reinhardt occasionally hummed the air in an undertone, to the delight of the little company. "Who could have written such beautiful songs, do you suppose?" said Elizabeth.

"Why, the songs themselves tell you," said Erich. "They are the work of journeymen, artisans, and the general rabble."

Reinhardt answered Elizabeth's question: "They are not written at all. They appear spontaneously and drift about in the air like the gossamer, and are sung in many places simultaneously.





In the garden room





I M M E N S E E



Our own feelings and emotions are expressed as vividly in them as if we had written them ourselves."

Reinhardt picked up the next song:

"I stood on the lofty mountain
And gazed at the vale below."

"I know this one," said Elizabeth. "Let us sing it together." Her soft, sweet alto and Reinhardt's tenor blended exquisitely in a melody, almost too supernatural and mysterious to be of human origin. The mother sat busily sewing as they sang, and Erich folded his arms and listened with eager interest. At the conclusion of the song, Reinhardt quietly laid it aside, and as he did so the tinkle of herd bells was wafted to them on the gentle evening breeze from the shore of the lake. As they involuntarily listened to it, they heard a boy's fresh voice, singing:





I M M E N S E E



"I stood on the lofty mountain
And gazed at the vale below."

Reinhardt smilingly said: "Do you hear?
That is the way the song goes from mouth to
mouth."

"It is often sung around here," said Elizabeth.

"Yes, that is so," said Erich. "It is Caspar,
the herd boy, who is singing. He is driving the
cows home."

They listened until the sound of the bells died
away among the farm buildings. "Those are the
old primeval tones of Mother Nature," said Rein-
hardt. "They sleep in the forest. Only God
knows who wakens them."

He took up another song. It was fast grow-
ing dark, and the woods across the lake were
bathed in the ruddy evening glow. Reinhardt
unrolled the paper, and Elizabeth kept it in place





I M M E N S E E



with her hand and followed the lines with her
eye as Reinhardt read:

“For my mother’s sake
I must the *other* take;
My sun of joy is set;
I must forget, forget:
I think my heart will break.

“They say, it was not well
That at Love’s feet I fell.
Is it not greater shame
To bear an unloved name?
I could, but must not, tell.

“Joy’s leaves, the south wind curled,
To the ground are hurled.
Had it not come to me,
And I could a wanderer be,
Up and down the world!”





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While he read, Reinhardt felt the paper tremble. When he had finished Elizabeth gently pushed her chair back and quietly went to the garden. Her mother's eyes watched her, and when Erich rose to go after her, she said, "Elizabeth has something to do there." So Erich did not follow.

The shades of evening were fast obscuring garden and lake, night moths fluttered past the open doors, and the strong perfume of flowers and shrubs filled the room. The croaking of frogs rose from the water in monotonous chorus. Near the windows a nightingale sang and its mate answered further down the garden. The moon just peeped above the trees. Reinhardt watched Elizabeth's slender figure disappearing down the walk, then rolled up his papers, bade Erich and the mother good-night, and went to the lake.





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The shadows of the quiet woods stretched far out upon the water. The middle of the lake was irradiated with the gentle glow of the moon. Occasionally there was a slight rustle of leaves. They felt not the wind, only the soft breath of the summer night. As Reinhardt was walking along the edge of the lake he saw a water lily some distance out from the bank. Wishing to see it more nearly, he disrobed and stepped into the water, which was shallow near the shore. Sharp sticks and stones cut his feet before the water was deep enough for swimming. Suddenly he went down into a deep hole, and it was some time before he could reach the surface again. Then he struck out vigorously and swam about somewhat aimlessly, trying to make out just where he was. He soon saw the lily again. There it lay, glittering among glossy leaves, upon the still water.



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He swam slowly toward it, now and then raising his arms out of the water to catch the flash of the drops, but, despite his utmost exertions, it seemed to him that he got no nearer to it, and yet, when he looked back, the shore grew more and more indistinct. He did not relax his efforts, however, and at last was so near to the lily that he could clearly see its silvery petals. At that very instant he found himself in a network of smooth, clinging stems below the surface, which were twisting themselves around his limbs. An unknown, mysterious water spread darkly about him, and he heard near by the splash of fish jumping out of it. A sudden feeling of dread possessed him. He was becoming so closely enmeshed in the lily net that he grew alarmed, released himself with a great effort, and swam back to the shore in breathless haste. Once again in shallow water, he looked





I M M E N S E E



back and saw the lily, resting in solitary beauty above the dark, mysterious depths. He dressed himself and slowly returned to the house. As he entered from the garden the mother was assisting Erich in preparations for a little business trip on the following day.

“Where have you been and what has kept you out so late,” said she.

“I have been trying to get a water lily,” he replied; “but I tried in vain.”

“That is very strange,” said Erich. “What in the world did you want of a water lily?”

“I was very fond of a lily which I once knew,” said Reinhardt; “but that was a long time ago!”

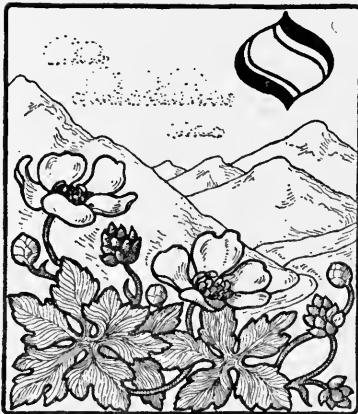


IX
ELIZABETH



IX

ELIZABETH



IN the next forenoon Reinhardt and Elizabeth went to the opposite shore of the lake. Their road took them at first through woods and then along a high bluff. Erich had requested

Elizabeth to show Reinhardt the most beautiful scenery in the immediate neighborhood during his absence, and particularly the view of the farm from the other shore. The two went from one charming spot to another, but at last Elizabeth was tired and seated herself in the grateful shade





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of overhanging branches, while Reinhardt leaned against a tree near her. The call of a cuckoo, deep in the woods, recalled memories of the old days. He looked at Elizabeth with a smile, and said, "Shall we hunt for strawberries?"

"It is not strawberry time," she replied.

"But it soon will be," he said.

Elizabeth sadly shook her head and said no more. She arose and they started again. As she walked by Reinhardt's side, he could not keep his eyes away from her slender figure. Her steps were so light that she seemed to glide along as if her garments were wings. He slackened his pace several times that he might observe her more easily. At last they reached an open spot covered with heather and commanding an extended view of the country. Reinhardt stooped and plucked a blossom, and as he looked up at her there was





Do you know this flower?



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an expression of deepest sorrow in his face. "Do you know this flower, Elizabeth?" he asked.

She looked at him in surprise. "Yes, it is the heather. I have often gathered it in the woods."

"I have an old book at home," said Reinhardt, "in which I used to write all kinds of songs and verses. I do not write in it any more. There is a heather between its leaves, but it is a withered one. Do you know who gave it to me?"

She silently bowed assent, then cast down her eyes and looked at the flower he held in his hand. When she lifted them he saw that they were filled with tears.

"Elizabeth," he said, "somewhere, over there beyond those blue mountains, is our lost youth. Where has it gone?"

They spoke no more together of this as they walked side by side to the lake. The air





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had grown sultry and dark, and angry-looking clouds were piling up in the west. "I fear there is going to be a storm," said Elizabeth, and they quickened their pace until they reached the boat. While crossing, Elizabeth rested her hand upon the rail. Reinhardt looked at her occasionally, as he was rowing, but her eyes were steadily fixed upon those far-away blue mountains, so he looked at her hand, whose delicate lines revealed only too plainly what her face concealed. He saw in it those unmistakable traces of secret sorrow which imprint themselves upon fair women's hands when they lie folded at night over weary, aching hearts. As soon as Elizabeth, however, realized he was looking at her hand, she slowly lowered it to the water's edge.

When the farm was reached they saw the barrow of a scissors-grinder in front of the house. A man with shaggy, black hair vigorously worked





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the treadle, humming a gipsy melody between his teeth. A dog, harnessed to the barrow, lay panting by his side. A girl in shabby attire, with fine but faded features, extended her hand to Elizabeth for alms. Reinhardt felt in his pockets, but Elizabeth anticipated him and emptied the contents of her purse into the beggar's palm. Then she quickly turned, and Reinhardt heard her sob as she slowly went up the stairs. He was about to follow her, but at sight of the girl again he paused. She was still standing there with the money in her hand. "What more do you want?" said he.

She started. "I want nothing more," said she. Then turning toward him and staring at him wildly, she moved slowly away. He called to her, but she did not hear. With bowed head and arms crossed over her breast, she kept on, and an old song rang in his ears—





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“Then will love be gone,
And I alone.”

Reinhardt stood for an instant as if stunned, then turned and went to his room. He tried to lose himself in work, but thoughts would not come. After making fruitless efforts for an hour, he went down to the living-room. It was empty. A red ribbon which Elizabeth had worn round her neck that forenoon was lying on her sewing-table. He took it up, but it gave him such a pang that he had to replace it. As he could not sleep he went down to the lake, and unfastening the boat, rowed to the other side and followed the path which he and Elizabeth had taken a short time before. When he reached the house again it was very dark. He saw Erich's driver taking the horses out, for the traveller had returned. As he entered the house again he heard Erich's steps in





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the garden room, but he did not go to meet him. He listened a moment, then went to his own room. He seated himself in an arm chair by the window and tried to listen to a nightingale, singing in a yew tree below, but he heard only the beating of his own heart. All in the house were at rest. Hour after hour passed, but he took no heed of time. Thus the weary night wore away. At last he arose and went to the open window. The leaves were heavy with the night dews. The nightingale had ceased its singing. The deep blue blackness of the night sky was gradually disappearing before the pale golden glow in the east. A fresh breeze sprang up and fanned his heated brow. The first lark soared into the sky and filled all the air with its delicious morning song.

Reinhardt suddenly turned, went to his table, and wrote a few lines. Then taking his cap and





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cane, and leaving the paper unfolded upon the table, he noiselessly opened the door and went down stairs. The morning light filled every room. The great house cat stretched itself upon the rug and rubbed its back against Reinhardt's hand, which he involuntarily held out to it. Out in the garden the sparrows were chattering in the branches, telling the world that the night had passed. Suddenly he heard a door open and approaching steps. He looked around and Elizabeth stood before him. She placed her hand upon his arm. Her lips moved, but her words were inaudible. At last she said: "You are never coming again, Reinhardt. I know it. You are never coming back again."

"Never again," he replied. She withdrew her hand and spoke no more. He went to the door, then turned for a last look. She stood





— "Never" —





I M M E N S E E



motionless and gazed at him, as if with dead eyes. He advanced a step, stretched out his arms to her imploringly, then, with a supreme effort, turned and vanished from her sight. The world was flooded with the glory of the morning light. The dewdrops on the spiders' webs glistened in the first rays of the rising sun. Reinhardt did not look back again. Immensee gradually disappeared behind him. Before him outstretched the great wide world. Farther and farther away receded the blue mountains which hid his lost youth.



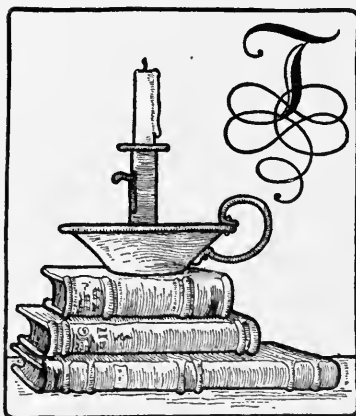
X

THE VISION FADES AWAY



X

THE VISION FADES AWAY



THE moon shone no longer through the window panes. The room grew dark. But the old man sat yet a while with folded arms in his arm chair, lost in revery. Gradually the darkness all about him changed to a great dark lake. A black, mysterious body of water stretched far into the distance, ever darker, ever deeper, ever more mysterious, and at last, so far away that the old man's eyes could hardly discern it, he saw a water lily floating in solitary beauty and purity.





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The door was opened and a bright light streamed into the room.

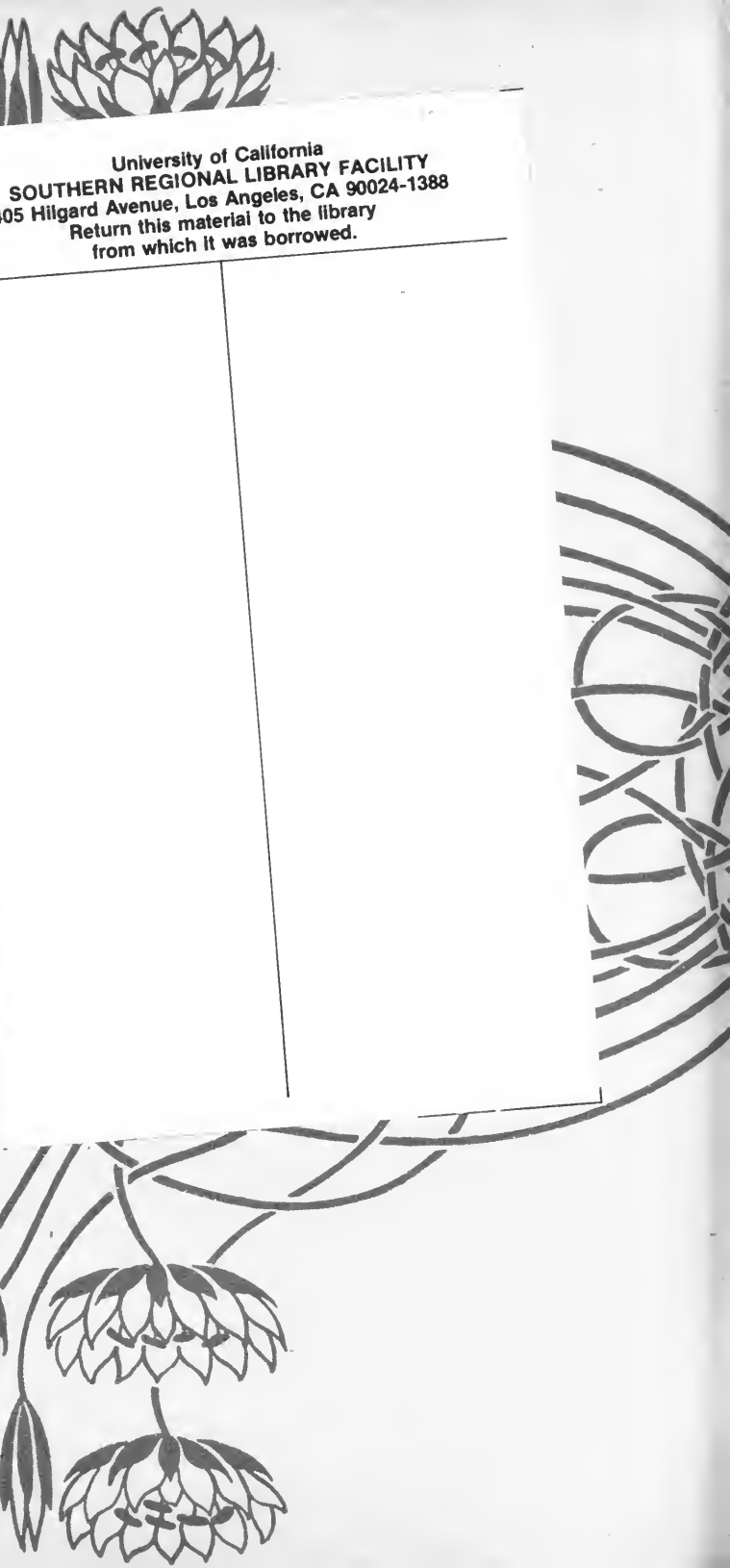
“It is well that you are come, Brigitte,” said the old man. “You may bring in the light.”

He drew up his chair to the table, took one of the open books, and buried himself in the studies which were his passionate delight in his lost youth,—in their youth together, now lost forever beyond the blue mountains.





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